

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

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Head : 118 - Planning Department Subhead (No. & title) : 700 – General other non-recurrent

Programme : (1) – Territorial and Sub-regional Planning

Controlling Officer : Director of Planning

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question : Please give an account of the Study on Rural Planning and Land Management in the New Territories. When will the study be launched and completed?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

There are large tracts of agricultural land in the New Territories outside the Country Parks, which have not been identified for urban development. Under a general decline of agriculture, such areas have been subject to various forms of development pressure. Many of these areas are used for such purposes as container storage, container vehicle parking, open storage and vehicle wrecking yards; and some are simply left idle anticipating some form of developments.

The prevalence of existing and unauthorized container-related and open storage uses has caused a general decline of environmental quality in many of our rural areas. Although container back-up and open storage zones have been designated on statutory outline zoning plans, these zoned areas often lack provision of the necessary infrastructure such as proper access and drainage, and there is no proactive management of the land.

The purpose of the “Study on Rural Planning and Land Management in the New Territories” is to facilitate community discussion of the issues related to land use in the rural areas, identify practicable implementation and management measures and devise a strategy to improve the rural environment. The Study is being carried out in two phases. Phase One, aiming at identifying problems and possible redress to better manage the rural environment, is being carried out in-house by the Planning Department and would be completed in late 2003. Subject to the results of the Phase One study, Phase Two is intended to formulate an implementation framework and to work out action plans for pilot projects, with some specialist inputs from consultants. Phase Two would take about 18 months to complete.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

B C K FUNG

Director of Planning

21 March 2003